

NOTE: School bus danger zone graphic attached



PRESS RELEASE

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Southwest Georgia...

Safety First as Students Head Back to School

TIFTON – Students heading back to school means more traffic, increased congestion and the need for extra safety precautions.

As back-to-school season gets into full swing, the Georgia Department of Transportation urges drivers to put safety first – especially in and around school zones, buses and children. From school buses loading and unloading, to kids walking and biking, to parents dropping off and picking up – dangers abound.

- **Pay attention to school zone flashing beacons and obey school zone speed limits.**
- **Obey school bus laws. Stop behind the bus and do not pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.**
- **If the lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, opposing traffic must stop unless it is on a divided highway with a grass or concrete median.**
- **Watch for students gathering near bus stops, and for kids arriving late, who may dart into the street. Children are often unpredictable; they take risks and tend to ignore hazards.**

Most children who lose their lives in school bus-related incidents are ages 4 to 7, on foot and are hit by the bus or a motorist illegally passing a stopped bus, according to the National Safety Council.

“It's never more important for drivers to slow down and pay attention than when kids are present – especially in the peak traffic hours before and after school,” District Engineer Chad Hartley said. “If you're driving behind a school bus, increase your following distance to allow more time to stop once the lights start to flash. The 12-foot area around a school bus is the most dangerous for children. Stop far enough back to give them space to safely enter and exit the bus.”

Be alert and expect the unexpected. By exercising a little extra care and caution, drivers and pedestrians can co-exist safely in and around school zones.

***DriveAlert ArriveAlive** calls attention to an alarming increase in roadway fatalities across Georgia, many resulting from preventable crashes and distracted driving. **DriveAlert ArriveAlive** implores*

motorists to buckle up; stay off the phone and don't text; and drive alert. Visit www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/DAAA. #ArriveAliveGA. For information on the Department of Transportation, visit <http://www.dot.ga.gov>. You also may follow us on <http://www.facebook.com/GDOTSW> and <https://twitter.com/GDOTSW>

